

CHAPTER 2

GRADING STRUCTURES AND CLASSIFICATION

A. " Uniformity

All components of the U.S. Forces must adopt and uniformly apply the same grade and step rate structure within a given country.

B. Use of the U.S. GS and Federal Wage System (FWS) Grade Structures

The U.S. GS and FWS grade structures may be used if such structures are compatible with prevailing in-country alignment practices. When the U.S. grade structures are compatible, but exceptions to the structures are needed for specific occupations or job families due to differences between U.S. and in-country practice, the structure may be modified to reflect in-country practice, as follows:

1. Establish special schedules or rates for occupations when prevailing rates for those occupations are significantly higher or lower than rates provided under the U.S. grading structure.

2. Establish special schedules or rates for occupations when prevailing rates for those occupations are determined in a manner inconsistent with rate determination within the U.S. Forces structure.

3. When survey data indicate that the U.S. grade alignment deviates from prevailing practice over a period of time, consider changing occupational grade levels to better reflect prevailing practice. This should not be done after the fact to achieve a preferred survey result.

C. Alternatives to the Use of U.S. Grading Structures

1. When the U.S. grading structures are not used, develop the country grading structure (including the number of grades and steps, progression between steps, and the value of step increments), considering:

- a. Prevailing practices in the private non-U.S. Forces sector, and/or
- b. The practices of the in-country government (public) sector.

2. When U.S. grading structures are not used, establish key ranking or benchmark jobs to provide the framework of the grading structures and to determine relative values within occupational groupings and among levels of work. These values control the alignment of grade levels in job grading or classification standards and are vital for cross-occupation comparisons when evaluating positions not covered in the standards. Key ranking jobs need not be the same as survey jobs.

3. Key ranking jobs must be representative of heavily populated occupations within the U.S. Forces sector in a given country. Align them as closely as possible with non-U.S. Forces practices. Change alignment and definitions of

key ranking jobs only when significant changes in alignment occur in the non-U.S. Forces sector or when skill requirements change as a result of major technological changes in the U.S. Forces organizational structure.

D. Classification and Job Grading Standards and Guides

1. When U.S. grading structures are used, classify or grade jobs with applicable classification and job grading standards published by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and supplemental standards and guides issued by Service components or developed locally.

2. When U.S. grading structures are not used, develop classification and job grading standards and guides to ensure that positions or jobs are properly aligned in relation to the key ranking jobs.

3. All U.S. Forces components shall use identical classification and job standards for foreign national employees hired under the same hiring arrangement within a country (either indirect or direct hire).

4. Cover each job by a position or job description containing information sufficient to classify or grade it. Keep descriptions current and accurate.